Historic Preservation

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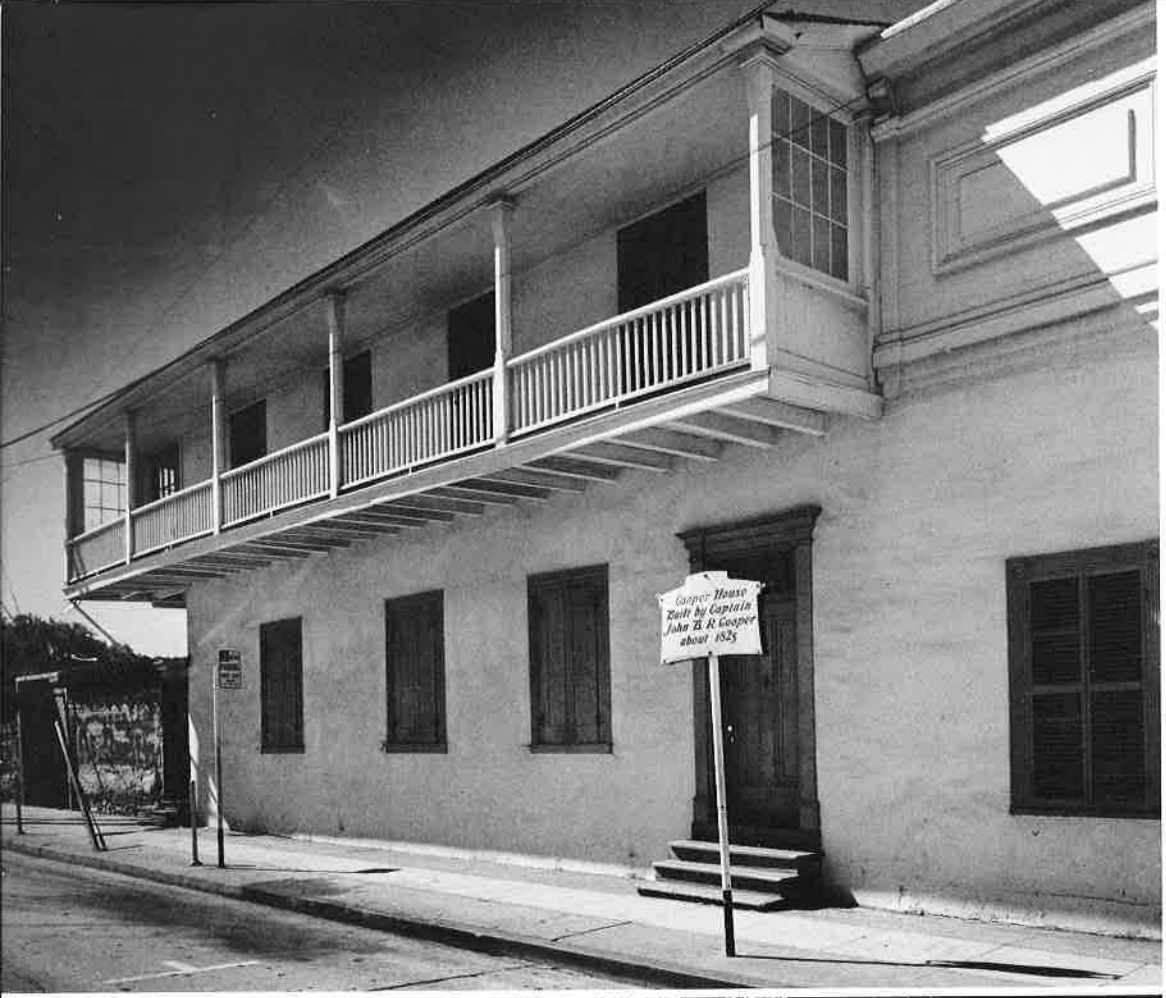

Cover: The dressed stone facade of Cliveden (1763-67), set against a section of the building's rubble rear wall. Cliveden, a National Trust property, is located at 6401 Germantown Avenue, Germantown, Philadelphia, Pa. (Photographs by HABS/ Jack E. Boucher)

Cooper-Molera Adobe (1829), adjacent to the National Trust's Casa Amesti. The property, with its grounds and outbuildings, was acquired by the National Trust on August 2, 1972, in accordance with the will of the late Miss Frances M. Molera of San Francisco. It has been leased to California's Department of Parks and Recreation, which will restore and operate the property as part of the Monterey State Historic Park, under the supervision of the National Trust. (Joshua Freiwald, top; Trend, bottom)

PRESERVATION FEATURES

Trust Historic Properties

Cliveden, Benjamin Chew's countryseat in Germantown, Pa., and the Cooper-Molera Adobe, Juan Batista Rogers Cooper's frontier home, near the old capital square in Monterey, Calif., are two new Trust Historic Properties. They join 10 other properties owned by the Trust around the country—from California to New York to Massachusetts to Pennsylvania to the District of Columbia to Virginia to Louisiana. Four for Virginia, two for California, two for the nation's capital, one for the remaining four states—and none for the other 43.

Cliveden (1763), tied to American Revolutionary history through Benjamin Chew and the fiery Battle of Germantown, will be the focus of the National Trust's programs for the American Revolution Bicentennial celebration in 1976. It broadens our property representation to include the Middle Atlantic states while the Cooper-Molera Adobe (1829), being across the street from Casa Amesti, adds substantially to our footing on the West Coast. Chew, Philadelphia lawyer, and Cooper, English-born Massachusetts sea captain, both offer to the properties the character and color typical of their positions in life.

The 12 Historic Properties are but a few of the many properties offered to the National Trust. Some properties are currently under consideration or will be accepted when their donor's plans take effect; others fail to meet the Trust's criteria for acceptance.

Will there be additional Trust Historic Properties and what is our position? In the 1966 Annual Report, Chairman of the Board of Trustees Gordon Gray stated, "It has not, as you know, been the policy of the National Trust to acquire properties in competition with local interest, but I am persuaded that it does need to increase the number, variety and geographical distribution of its holdings. Our properties, candidly, are not a broad representation of America in terms of building types, association, era and culture. Missing from the Trust-owned properties are those associated with science, such as study rooms or laboratories of eminent Americans; those associated with various ethnic backgrounds; those related to the lives and works of artists and writers; sites or buildings related to American business; American labor; and the communications media."

The three Trust Historic Properties acquired since 1966 have not balanced out these deficiencies, but it is important that one of them, Chesterwood in Stockbridge, Mass., was the studio of a leading 19th-century American sculptor, Daniel Chester French.

The announcement of a Trust Historic Property acquisition is an exciting event that follows much behind-the-scenes planning and activity. Each property is different in the details of its architectural and historical significance; each likewise has a different meaning to its community. Each symbolizes the total preservation effort of the Trust and is in a sense a national preservation service center—a dramatic setting to introduce Trust programs to the public. Trust Historic Properties were visited this year by 160,000 persons, approximately five times the number of National Trust members.

Trust Historic Properties, according to the objectives of the Board of Trustees, should be operated "with exemplary taste and effectiveness, should set standards to be emulated by preservationists across the nation." In some cases funds are lacking to accomplish, except on a long-term basis, this ideal, but preservation needs and programs are constantly being set up and reviewed.

"Our properties program must be broader than the operation of selected historic house museums; we must update the entire concept of the protection of historic property with emphasis on other techniques of protection," stated James C. Massey this spring, in accepting the position of Director of the Department of Historic Properties. Emphasizing his interest in new directions for Trust property ownership and utilization, he continued, "Historic house museums, because of their high cost, should be limited to the most important landmarks. There is a need for a balanced philosophy of historic property protection through preservation techniques such as protective covenants, adaptive uses and cooperative agreements. There should be less restoration and more preservation at our properties and a heightened recognition of their continuing history. Our properties must be a part of today's life and we need to increase our services to the public through educational programs, technical publications and a conservation and restoration workshop."

The National Trust program emphasizes new life in old settings. Of vital importance is its use policy, which makes Trust historic museums available to organizations for special activities. There will continue to be countless occasions when the house lights of a property will shine into the night, to the gardens and streets, and the building will ring with festivities signaling its continuing cultural and social life. Such is the role of a Trust Historic Property. —T.B.M.

B. Chew

Cliveden

Raymond V. Shepherd, Jr.

In the afternoon I rode . . . about nine miles from Philadelphia to the northwest. The country on both sides of the road was covered with a large forest. The trees were all deciduous and I did not see a single fir or pine. Most of the trees were different sorts of oak. But we likewise saw chestnut, walnut, locust, apple and hickory trees, with blackberry bushes and the like. The ground ceased to be so even as it had been before and began to look more like the English soil, diversified with hills and valleys. We found neither mountains nor great stones, and the wood was so much thinned and the ground so uniformly even that we could see a great way between the trees under which we rode without any inconvenience, for there were no bushes to stop us. . . .

As we went on in the forest we continually saw at moderate distances little fields which had been cleared of the wood. Each one of these was a farm . . . commonly very pretty, and a walk of trees frequently led from them to the highroad. The houses were all built of brick or of the stone which is found here everywhere. Every countryman, even the poorest peasant, had an orchard with apples, peaches, chestnuts, walnuts, cherries, quinces . . . and sometimes we saw vines climbing in them. The valleys were frequently blessed with little brooks of crystal clear water. The fields by the sides of the road were almost all mown and of grain crops. . . .

After a ride of six English miles we came to Germantown; this settlement has only one street but is nearly two English miles long. It is for the greatest part inhabited by Germans, who come from their country to North America and settle here because they enjoy such privileges as they are not possessed of anywhere else. Most of the inhabitants are tradesmen and make almost everything in such quantity and perfection that in a short time this province will want very little from England, its mother country. Most of the houses are built of stone, which is mixed with glimmer and found everywhere around Philadelphia, but is scarcer further on. . . . They are commonly two stories high. . . . The roofs consist of shingles of white cedar wood. . . . Each house had a fine garden. . . .

—Peter Kalm, Swedish botanist
September the 21st 1748

Photographs by Jack E. Boucher for the Historic American Buildings Survey

Cliveden. Opposite page, above: Roof detail, with urns.
Far left: Benjamin Chew. Center left: Mahogany chest of drawers, c. 1770. Left: Parlor with marble-faced fireplace.

Top: Entrance separated by screen of four columns from the rear stair hall. Above: Another view of the parlor, showing fireplace with tabernacle frame and broken pediment over the doorway.

Mr. Shepherd is the administrator of Cliveden. He formerly was assistant curator of decorative arts at the Philadelphia Museum of Art.

It was in this inhabited wilderness that Benjamin Chew, the prominent Philadelphia lawyer, built his 18th-century countryseat, Cliveden. For the succeeding two centuries, except for one brief period, the handsome house was occupied by the Chew family. In June 1972, it became the 11th historic property of the National Trust for Historic Preservation. Cliveden will open on October 4, 1972, the anniversary of the Battle of Germantown in which the house played a key role nearly 200 years ago.

Standing serenely against the onslaught of man—from Washington's cannonade during the Battle of Germantown in 1777 to modern encroachments—Cliveden is surrounded by a six-acre glade of centuries-old trees at the six-mile post northwest of Philadelphia. It is an oasis amid a bustling community. Built between 1763 and 1767, Chew's stately country house remains essentially as originally built with an 1868 addition at the back. The house is a reminder of the taste of its first owner and his gracious way of life; of succeeding generations of the Chew family who have lived there and respected it; of the ages in which they lived; and of the generosity of the present generation that gave the mansion to the National Trust for Historic Preservation. Cliveden is a magnificent legacy—spacious and pretentious but restrained in ornamentation—one of the last surviving examples of domestic architecture remaining in Philadelphia from the Middle-Georgian period.

Benjamin Chew (1722–1810) lived in the dynamic formative years of our nation when Philadelphia was becoming an important colonial center of government, jurisprudence, commercial prosperity, architecture, decorative and fine arts. The city's activity and wealth attracted many able and influential men from other English colonies. Benjamin Chew was one of these men.

Born in Maryland, he was the only son

The Battle of Germantown

Cliveden in the 1777 Battle of Germantown. The painting by E. L. Henry (1841–1919) hangs in the entrance hall.

of Dr. Samuel Chew and Mary Galloway Chew to survive to maturity. Dr. Chew was a successful physician, later appointed Chief Justice of the Lower Counties (present-day Delaware) by the Penn Proprietors. At an early age, Benjamin was sent to Penn's "greene countrie town" to study law with the eminent lawyer Andrew Hamilton. Following his preceptor's death, the young student traveled to London to continue his training in the Middle Temple—a move that was to bring him a large practice when he returned to Dover in 1744. Two years later, at age 24, he was admitted to the bar of the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania. By 1754 Benjamin Chew had settled in Philadelphia in a house on Front Street near Dock Creek with his wife, Mary Galloway and four daughters. Quickly he became a leading lawyer in Philadelphia. In 1755 Mary Chew died during childbirth. Two years later Chew married Elizabeth Oswald, a niece and heir of Joseph Turner, one of Philadelphia's leading merchants and a member of the Governor's Council. On September 30, 1758, Chew's first and only son, Benjamin, was born.

In subsequent years, Benjamin Chew became a powerful ally of the Penn Proprietors heading the Governor's Council. He often opposed Benjamin Franklin, then the leader of the Pennsylvania Assembly, particularly on tax matters. Chew also led the Council in resistance to England's "taxation without representation," which ended in the Non-Importation Resolution of 1765. He was one of the commissioners from Pennsylvania who supervised the Mason-Dixon surveys, Register-General of Pennsylvania and the Lower Counties, Attorney General of Pennsylvania and finally Chief Justice of Pennsylvania in 1774. Thus during the colonial period, Chew held a key position in Pennsylvania's colonial politics and in the judiciary.

As his family and fortune increased, Ben-

After the signing of the Declaration of Independence on July 4, 1776, the American army faced hard times. The British were intent on capturing New York City. In the battle of Long Island in August, Gen. George Washington's army suffered heavy losses and retreated, leaving New York open to the enemy.

Expecting that Gen. William Howe would press his advantage and continue toward Philadelphia, the American capital, General Washington set up defensive positions in New Jersey and Pennsylvania, while informing Congress and the Pennsylvania Assembly of the serious condition of his depleted army. Fortunately for the American cause, General Howe was content to remain headquartered in New York City for the winter, and General Washington was able to secure necessary supplies and forces. Still anticipating that the enemy would make an "immediate attack" on Philadelphia, General Washington asked in June 1777 that the militia be ready to march when General Howe revealed his plan.

Rather than take a political position while on the bench, Justice Benjamin Chew had remained faithful to the king's lawful authority and limitations. Yet even before General Howe made a move, all former British officials in Philadelphia were arrested. Gov. John Penn and Justice Chew were taken to Union Forge in northern New Jersey and kept there until the following spring.

In July, General Howe began moving in. A British fleet was sighted off Cape Henlopen and by mid-August the British troops were disembarking at the upper end of Chesapeake Bay, at the head of the Elk River. As British troops headed north, General Washington quickly headed south and made a stand against them on September 11 at Chadds Ford on the Brandywine Creek. The American army lost and withdrew to the upper Schuylkill River north of Philadelphia. British troops continued to advance and reached Philadelphia on September 26, taking up defensive positions, some as far north as Germantown.

By October the American army had been reinforced and General Washington planned a strike at Germantown, south of his own camp. The Marquis de Chastellux, a French military observer, pieced together various accounts by participants in the battle of Germantown; in 1780 he described it this way:

"General Washington . . . left his camp towards midnight [of October 3rd], marching in two columns, one of which was to turn Germantown on the eastward, the other on the west: two brigades of the right column were ordered to form the corps de reserve, *to separate themselves from the column at the distance of the attack, and follow the main street of Germantown. A very thick fog came on. . . . While everything thus succeeded on the right, General Washington, at the head of the reserve, was expecting to see his left column arrive, and pursued his march through the main street. But a fire of musketry, which proceeded from a large house within pistol shot of the street, suddenly checked the van of his troops. It was resolved to attack this house [Cliveden]; but cannon were necessary, for it was known to be of stone, and could not therefore be set on fire. Unfortunately they had only six-pounders . . . this cannonade produced to effect; it penetrated the walls, but did not demolish them. The Chevalier de Mauduit . . . proposed . . . to get from a nearby barn some straw and hay which they would pile against the front door and set afire. . . . By this time the enemy began to rally . . . Cornwallis was coming with all haste from Philadelphia . . . the American army [was] losing their time at the stone house. . . . The contest had become too unequal; it became necessary to think of retreat. . . . General Washington retired to an excellent position four miles from Germantown. . . ."*

The day was lost for General Washington and the American cause. The fog, the unexpected battle at the Chew house and the confusion that ensued foiled General Washington's well-planned attack. In the muddle, the American troops fired on one another and fled.

During the winter that followed, the American forces endured the suffering at Valley Forge. Despite heavy losses, the American troops gained some respect for their attempt at Germantown to rebound from their disadvantageous position in the war.

After Germantown, General Howe turned his attention to the Delaware River, the water route to Philadelphia and attacked Fort Mifflin and Fort Mercer. A month of battle ensued, leaving the entire river access to Philadelphia clear for the British fleet.

R.V.S.

Above: Rear view of Cliveden and its dependencies.

Far left: Entrance and flanking room from the stair hall.

Center left: Mahogany desk and bookcase in the sitting room.

Left: Paneled dining room wall, with fireplace between closets.

Right: High-arched back sofa in the parlor with large looking glass.

jamin Chew in good English tradition desired a countryseat in keeping with his social position. Many wealthy Philadelphians had already built elegant houses, some of which still stand (and are open to the public), along the Schuylkill and Delaware Rivers; others built south of the built-up portion of the city or to the north near Frankford and Germantown. In 1763 Chew and his family spent the summer at Chief Justice William Allen's country estate, Mount Airy. There, north of Germantown, he was away from the heat and flies of the city. Delighted with his stay, he wrote Allen who was in London. Justice Allen replied," It gives me great pleasure to hear that your abode contributed to your health and that you are likely to build and be my neighbor." Chew bought 11 acres from Edward Pennington in 1763 for £650. (Cliveden eventually comprised 60 acres.) Immediately he secured the services of Jacob Knor, the master carpenter who had worked on Germantown Academy, and John Hesser, a local Germantown mason.

From the architectural drawings and building accounts found among the Chew Papers, it is apparent that Benjamin Chew played a significant part in the designing of Cliveden, with suggestions by William Peters and the workmen on the site. He adapted the basic plan from an engraving "A View of the Palace at Kew from the Lawn" published in the *Gentleman's Magazine* for August 1763. A carefully drawn elevation and plan greatly reduced the size of the five-part palace to a more modest three-part plan consisting of a central block with single flanking service dependencies, placed along the plane of the facade and attached by screens. A second drawing shows the elevation further reduced to a two-story building similar to the plan used by William Buckland the following decade at the Hammond-Harwood House in Annapolis, Md. In all three designs, the gabled end of the buildings is to the front, although the gables for the main house were eventually placed at the sides in a manner typical of the colonies at this period.

Cliveden displays many of the elements typical of the English Neo-Palladian style house as modified by colonial American taste and means in the Middle-Georgian period. It is a two-and-one-half story rectangular house with five bays across the facade and has a small pedimented pavilion at the center, breaking forward from the plane of the facade, a pedimented doorframe with fluted columns supporting a full classical entablature, raised water table, horizontal belt course, modillion cornice and dormers with scroll brackets and massive chimneys at the ridge. The final over-all plan placed the main block in front of the service buildings so that a court was formed at the rear. Also in the plan were a kitchen dependency to the left attached to the main house by a curving arcade; gardens, both ornamental and kitchen; orchards; stable and coach house removed from the main complex; smoke house; hen house; summerhouse and "cold frames."

Considered on the drawings but apparently rejected were designs for ballustrades, cupolas and other doorframes. However, accepted was the idea for urns to be placed on plinths on the roof. In December 1766, Chew wrote to William Fisher, "I have shown the pattern of the urns sent over by Mr. Pennington to the knowing ones among us and have fixed on No. 2 only that it is to have little or no carve work as most suitable to the plainness of my building." The urns were shipped from Bristol, England, the following September.

In addition to the five drawings of elevations, four floor plans show a development of the room placements to afford both convenience and symmetry. Originally Chew's plan was to put the main staircase in a room removed from the main entrance, the most impressive room in the house. Instead of the usual straight-through hall to the garden, the final plan showed a broad T-shaped entrance with smaller flanking rooms at the front similar to the river entrance at Carter's Grove (1751) in Virginia. The entrance is separated from the commodious stairhall at the rear by a remarkable and unusual screen of four fluted Tuscan columns supporting a fully developed entablature. The 12-foot high ceiling completes the impression of the room as one of the grandest spaces in colonial American architecture. The room is further embellished by a panelled dado and by broken pedimented doorways supported by brackets of carved acanthus leaf foliation.

Proceeding through the screen one comes to the gently rising staircase with a landing where an observer could have looked out a pedimented window onto the formal gardens. Today the window is darkened by the 1868 addition, a lodging room above "the school room." The window was replaced by a mirrored door leading to the lodging room by means of a hidden staircase.

Before the main staircase to the southeast is the most elaborately decorated room in the house, the parlor. The projecting chimney breast boasts a tabernacle frame, marble-faced fireplace, and a mantel shelf supported by acanthus leaf-carved brackets. The doorway has a broken pediment, similar to those in the entrance. A complex cornice with Wall of Troy dentils and generous chair rail complete the room finished by Jacob Knor in 1765.

To the left of the stairhall is the dining room, where the fireplace wall is panelled in an early 18th-century style with two symmetrically placed closets. The third entrance into the stairhall yields access to the side stairs probably used by children and servants.

Three of the four rooms on the second floor have panelled fireplace walls, similar to that in the dining room, and built-in closets. The other room was perhaps used as a sitting or sewing room. On the second floor, like the first, access to all rooms is gained from the central hall for added privacy and convenience.

By December 1767, the house was ready to receive the Chew family. Construction had cost £4,718.12.3 and had taken four years to complete. It is truly a handsome creation worthy of the man and his position in the province that has remained essentially his creation. However, following the completion of Cliveden, the turmoil of the Revolutionary War was to engulf Germantown and her residents.

Exactly what damage Cliveden sustained in the 1777 battle is unknown, but Justice Chew declared his house "an absolute wreck, and materials [were] not to be had to keep out the weather." It is little wonder the Chief Justice, uncertain of his position under the new state government, sold Cliveden in 1779 to Blair McClenachen, a young merchant from Ireland and outfitter of privateers. The house remained in his possession for the

next 18 years. Just what changes he made during this period are also unknown.

When hostilities subsided and Justice Chew was no longer suspected of conspiring with the enemy, he was again called upon to fill an important judicial position, President of the High Court of Errors and Appeals. He served in that post from 1791 until his retirement 17 years later at age 85. In 1797 he regained possession of Cliveden, and until June 1972 the house remained in the Chew family.

One of the most notable features of Cliveden is its furnishings—furniture, paintings, prints, books, costumes, miniatures, accoutrements, etc.—which have been acquired by succeeding generations of the Chew family and which add to the historical heritage of the house. The furnishings are a further indication of the refined taste and discernment of a family over a 200-year period. Unlike many owners of old houses, the Chew family did not buy antiques in this century to furnish their rooms. Rather, they accumulated the family objects and never seemed to throw anything away. They had a deep respect for the Chief Justice, and a great sense of history.

Among the furnishings are some of the finest objects created in Philadelphia in the 18th and 19th centuries, objects that were created by artists who helped make Philadelphia's reputation as one of America's most important design centers. It is fortunate, indeed, that these pieces can be seen in a setting such as Cliveden.

Some of the most notable objects in the collection are pieces of the 18th-century furniture thought to have been made by Thomas Affleck (d. 1795). Born in Aberdeen, Scotland, and trained in London, Affleck came to Philadelphia in 1763 and made furniture for Gov. John Penn and other wealthy fashion-conscious clients. When Penn returned to London in 1771, Benjamin Chew bought Penn's elaborate house on Third Street, next to the Powel House (now a historic house museum). Nicholas B. Wainwright has suggested that Chew may have acquired this furniture with the house rather than at the sale of Governor Penn's furniture in 1788 as was believed.

Certainly one of the most magnificent creations of colonial Philadelphia is the high-arched back sofa with its sweeping scrolled arms, exposed mahogany seatrail with Gothic-arch applied fret and gadrooned molding all supported by Marlborough legs (with bases) and embellished with applied fret decoration. A bold creation, it is the focal point of the parlor. Family tradition also holds that the set of nine (probably there were at least 12 originally) upholstered-back side chairs were formerly Governor Penn's. Because of their flowing line and graceful stance, their design complements that of the sofa, though the chairs have molded front legs rather than applied fret decoration. As the chairs were covered in red leather and the edges marked by brass tacks until 15 years ago, perhaps they were used originally in a dining room.

The rarest survival, and one of the most elegant confections to have come down from an 18th-century Philadelphia family, is the pair of superb looking glasses and matching girandoles that adorn the walls of the parlor. A masterful handling of carved roses, scrolls, foliation and clustered columns in foreshortened perspective ranks these frames with the finest creations of Thomas Chippendale and Thomas Johnson of London. But these looking glasses are attributed to Philadelphia craftsmanship, making their creation even more remarkable.

According to family tradition these looking glasses were taken from Chew's fashionable Third Street house and used by the British at the Mischianza, the famous *fête champêtre* produced by Major André on the occasion of Gen. William Howe's return to London in 1778. Behind Joseph Warton's country house, Walnut Grove, south of the city, a "salon" 180 feet long was erected for dancing where "A great number of Lustres hung from a roof along the whole length of the building, Looking Glasses, Chandeliers and Girandoles covered the Sides. . . ." From André's description in the Chew Papers of barges, music, knights on horseback, ladies in costume and triumphal arches, it must have been one of the most elaborate and imaginative parties ever given in Philadelphia. Chew's young daughter, Peggy, was one of the participants, one of the "Ladies of the Blended Rose."

The mahogany desk and bookcase in the sitting room and the "chest upon chest" in the main lodging room on the second floor are among the first rank of the Philadelphia-Chippendale style. As they do not have a Penn tradition associated with them, they may have been acquired by Benjamin Chew directly from the cabinetmaker and thus be an indication of his own taste.

Another of the principal pieces of Philadelphia-Chippendale furniture is the mahogany serpentine chest of drawers with fluted canted corners that bears the cabinetmaker's label of Jonathan Gostelowe (1745–1795). It is worthy of note as the chest is one of two such documented case pieces (the other is at the Philadelphia Museum of Art) done in this craftsman's boldly individual style. It is one of the few pieces from Philadelphia cabinetmakers' shops of this period that departs from the usual rectilinear case and drawer construction. The piece dates from the 1770's and was perhaps acquired February 12, 1772, when Chew paid Gostelowe £6.13.9 "in full of all accounts & demands."

The earliest datable object in the house is the striking portrait of Capt. Joseph Turner, the uncle of Chew's second wife, painted in 1740 by John Smibert (1688–1751). So far this portrait is the only one to have been identified from Smibert's trip to Philadelphia in 1740. The companion portrait with carved and gilt frame is of Peggy Oswald, Chew's sister-in-law, and is among the most successful canvases of John Wollaston (American period 1749–67). It probably dates from 1758 when Wollaston spent a year working in Philadelphia.

Both the furnishings and Cliveden itself are valuable reminders of the way Germantown once was. From "inhabited wilderness" Germantown has grown into an industrialized suburb, with dense commercial and residential areas. But Cliveden, with its tree-filled grounds, remains as Benjamin Chew knew it, a gentleman's elegant countryseat. HP

For further reading—

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